Geographic Area

The break-out of surveys sent out by geographic area and type of facility were 174 urban, 327 rural and 190 frontier surveys. As illustrated in Figure 5, the return rate declined slightly among geographic areas. Urban areas had the highest return rate with 86.8 percent. Rural areas had the next highest return rate with 83.2 percent. The frontier areas' return rate wasn't far behind with 81.6 percent.

Figure 6 indicates that 47.4 percent of all full time budgeted positions and 39.2 percent of all part time budgeted positions were located in the urban geographic areas, but they accounted for only 23.7 percent of all budgeted vacancies, full time and part time combined. This means that 76.3 percent of the full and part time budgeted vacancies reported were in rural and frontier geographic areas. In addition 52.9 percent of turnovers were in frontier and rural geographic areas.

In comparison in 2003, 43.7 percent of full time budgeted positions and 16.4 percent of part time budgeted positions were located in the urban geographic areas, but they accounted for only 33.7 percent of all budgeted vacancies in 2003, full time and part time combined. Thus 66.3 percent of all full and part time budgeted vacancies reported were in rural and frontier geographic areas in 2003. Also in 2003, 64.4 percent of turnovers were in frontier and rural geographic areas.

Urban Defined
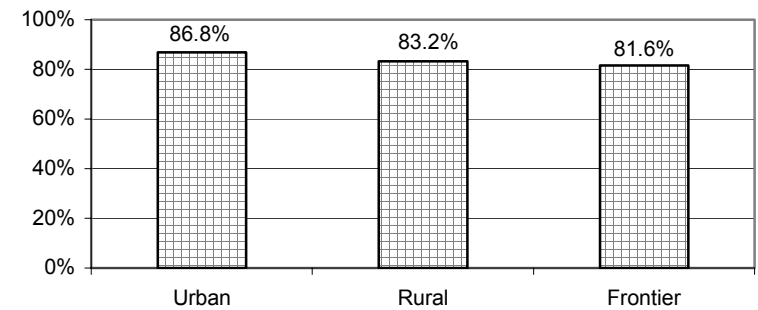*An area having a population center of 50,000 or more.*

Rural Defined
Population density of more than six persons per square mile but no population centers of 50,000 or more.
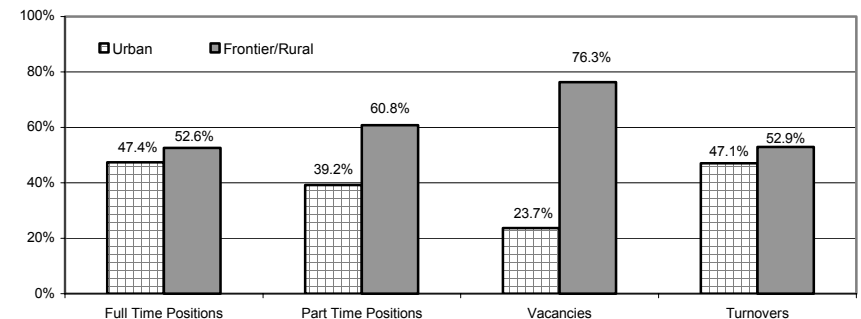
Frontier Defined
Population density of six or less persons per square mile.

Figure 5
Percent of Surveys Received by Geographic Area

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records

Figure 6
Percent of Full Time Positions, Part Time Positions, Combined Budgeted Vacancies and Combined Turnovers by Geographic Area

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records
Note: Turnover is the number of employees who left the facility during the fiscal year.
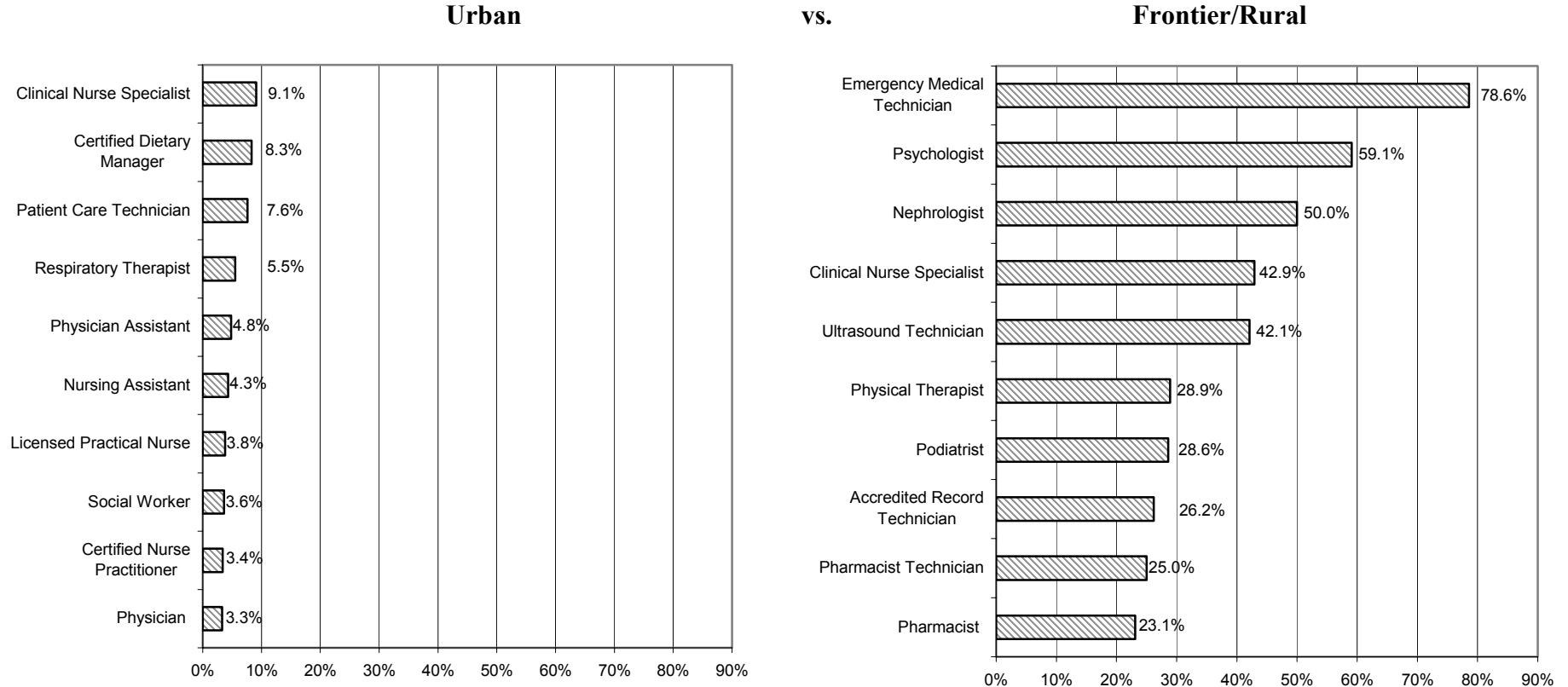Vacancy numbers are as of January 31st 2004.
For definitions of percent of vacancies and percent of turnovers see Appendix A.

The positions with the highest percent of vacancy in the urban and frontier/rural geographic areas are reflected in Figure 7. These positions had the highest percentage of vacancies of budgeted positions. Clinical nurse specialist had the highest vacancy rate in urban geographic areas with 9.1 percent, while emergency medical technician had the highest vacancy rate in frontier/rural geographic areas with 78.6 percent. The lowest vacancy rate for the urban geographic areas was physician with 3.3 percent, while the lowest vacancy rate for frontier/rural geographic areas was pharmacist with 23.1 percent.

Figure 7
Positions with the Highest Percent of Vacancies by Geographic Areas
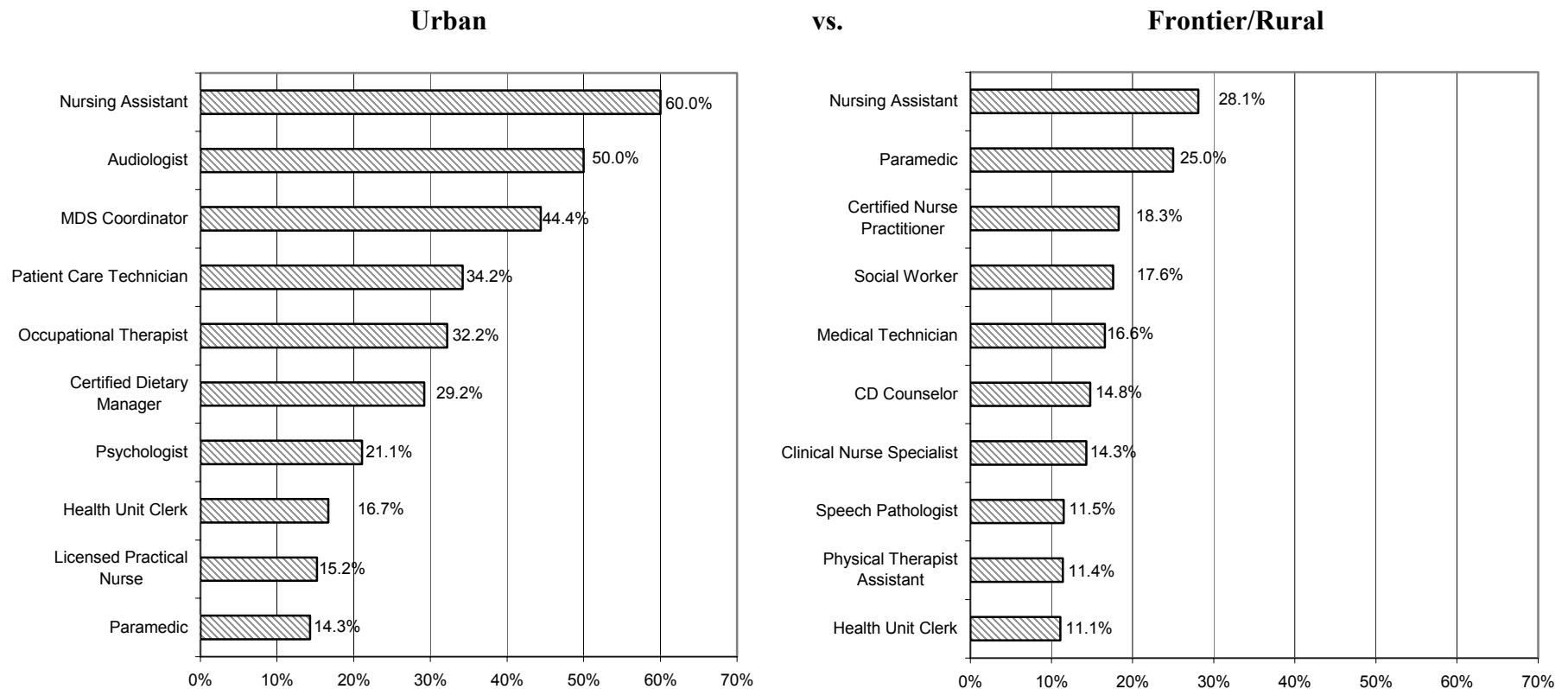
Urban vs. **Frontier/Rural**

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records
Note: Vacancy numbers are as of January 31st 2004.
    For definition of percent of vacancies see Appendix A.

The positions with the highest percent of turnovers in the urban and frontier/rural geographic areas are reflected in Figure 8. This means that these positions had the highest percentage of turnovers of budgeted positions. Nursing assistants had the highest turnover in urban geographic and in frontier/rural geographic areas with 60 percent and 28.1 percent respectively. The lowest turnover rate for the urban geographic areas was paramedic with 14.3 percent, while the lowest turnover rate for frontier/rural geographic areas was health unit clerk with 11.1 percent.

Figure 8
Positions with the Highest Percent of Turnovers by Geographic Areas

Urban vs. **Frontier/Rural**

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records
Note: Turnover is the number of employees who left the facility during the fiscal year.
    For definition of percent of turnovers see Appendix A.

Another way to look at vacancy percentages would be to list the top ten budgeted full-time positions and their vacancy rate. Figure 9 displays the top ten budgeted full-time positions and their vacancy rate. Of the top ten budgeted full-time positions in the urban geographic areas respiratory therapist had the highest vacancy rate with 5.5 percent followed by nursing assistant with 4.3 percent and licensed practical nurse with 3.8 percent. In the frontier/rural geographic areas physical therapist had the highest vacancy rate with 28.9 percent followed by medical technician with 19.3 percent and physician with 14 percent.

Figure 9
Top Ten Budgeted Full Time Positions and Percent of Vacancies
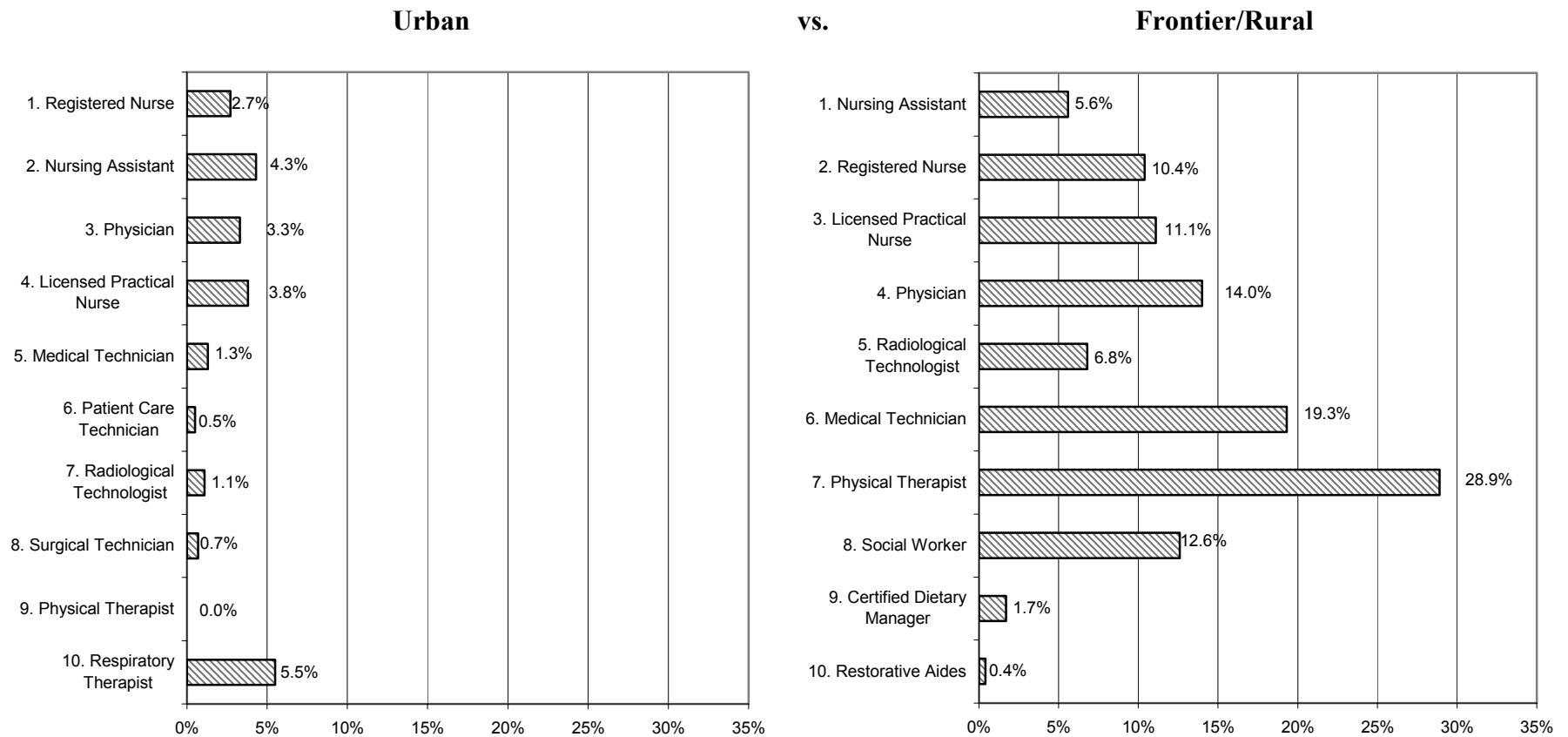
Urban vs. **Frontier/Rural**

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records
Note: Vacancy numbers are as of January 31st 2004.
  For definition of percent of vacancies see Appendix A.

Another way to look at turnover percentages would be to list the top ten budgeted full-time positions and their turnover rate. Figure 10 displays the top ten budgeted full-time positions and their turnover rate. Of the top ten budgeted full-time positions in the urban geographic areas nursing assistant had the highest turnover rate with 60 percent followed by patient care technician with 34.2 percent and licensed practical nurse with 15.2 percent. In the frontier/rural geographic areas nursing assistant was also the highest turnover rate with 28.1 percent followed by social worker with 17.6 percent and medical technician with 16.6 percent.

Figure 10
Top Ten Budgeted Full Time Positions and Percent of Turnovers
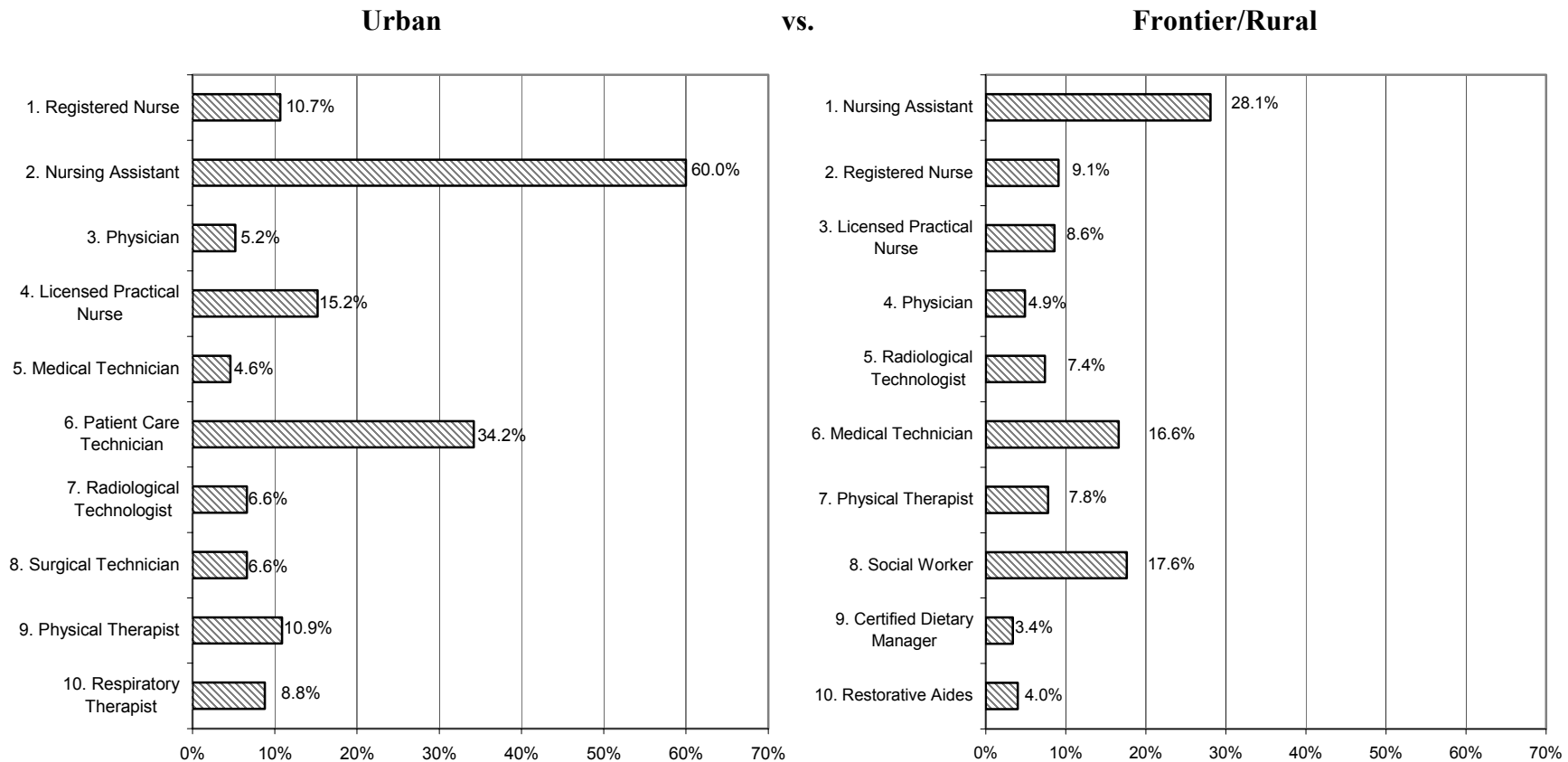
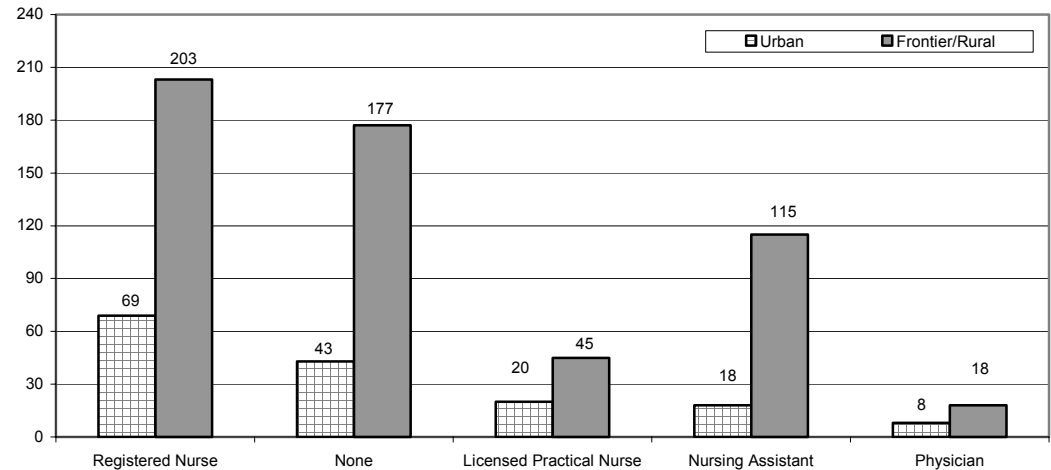**Urban   vs.   Frontier/Rural**

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records
Note: Turnover is the number of employees who left the facility during the fiscal year.
    For definition of percent of turnovers see Appendix A.

Figure 11 shows hard-to-fill positions in urban and frontier/rural geographic areas. Registered nurse was indicated most frequently as a hard-to-fill position in both urban and frontier/rural geographic areas. Sixty-nine of the 174 urban facilities indicated registered nurse as hard-to-fill while 203 of the 517 frontier/rural facilities indicated registered nurse as hard-to-fill. The second most frequently indicated position for both urban and frontier/rural areas was none. Forty-three facilities said they had no hard-to-fill positions in urban areas and 177 facilities said they had no hard-to-fill positions in frontier/rural areas.
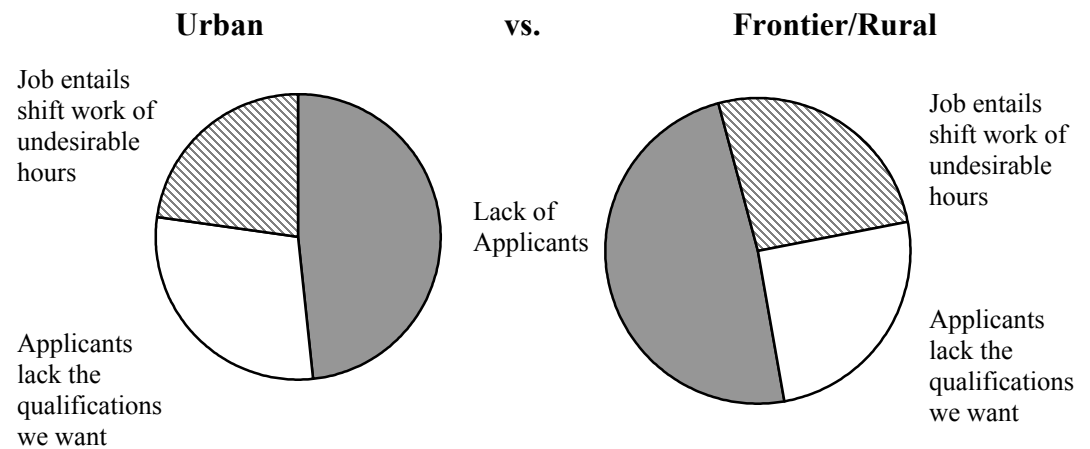
Figure 11
Hard-to-Fill Positions by Geographic Area

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records

Figure 12 shows the responses to why there were hard-to-fill vacancies for both urban and frontier/rural geographic areas. The number one reason for both urban and frontier/rural geographic areas was "lack of applicants". The number two reason for the urban geographic areas was "applicants lack the qualifications we want"; while the number two reason for frontier/rural geographic areas was "job entails shift work of undesirable hours". The number three reason for the urban geographic areas was "job entails shift work of undesirable hours"; while the number three reason for frontier/rural geographic areas was "applicants lack the qualifications we want".
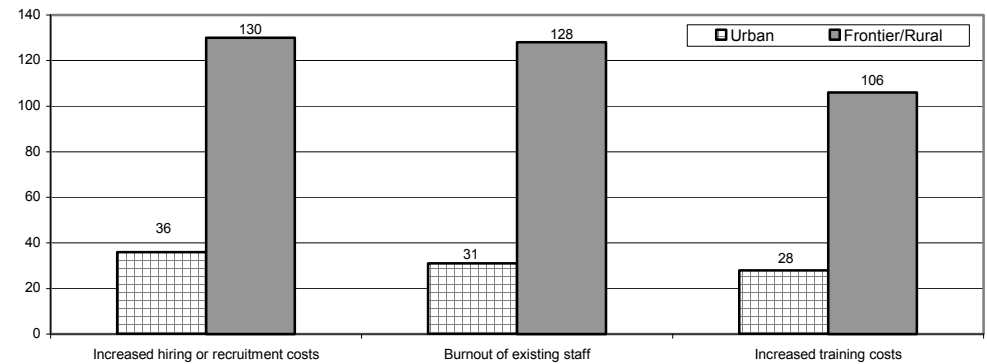
Figure 12
Responses Why Positions Were Hard-to-Fill by Geographic Area

Urban   **vs.**   **Frontier/Rural**

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records

14

Figure 13 shows the impact of vacancies or turnovers on an institution. The top response of the impact of vacancies or turnovers on an institution in urban geographic areas was "increased hiring or recruitment costs". The second most frequently indicated response in urban geographic areas was "burnout of existing staff" followed by "increased training costs". The top response of the impact of vacancies or turnovers on an institution in frontier/rural geographic areas was "increased hiring or recruitment costs" followed by "burnout of existing staff" and "increased training costs".
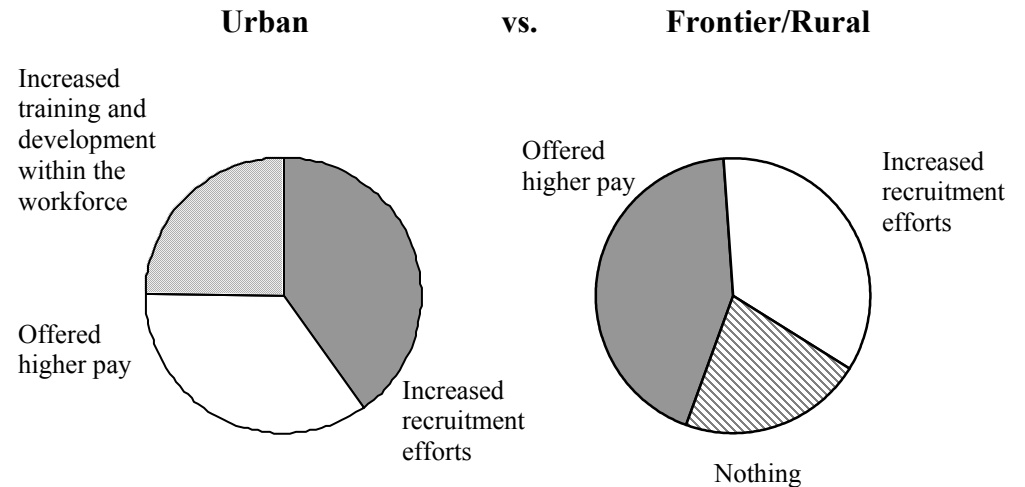
Figure 13
Impact of Vacancies or Turnovers on an Institution by Geographic Area

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records
Note: Turnover is the number of employees who left the facility during the fiscal year.
Vacancy numbers are as of January 31st 2004.
For definitions of percent of vacancies and percent of turnovers see Appendix A.

Figure 14 illustrates the measures taken to tackle the problem of hard-to-fill vacancies. The number one measure taken for urban geographic areas was "increased recruitment efforts"; while the number one measure for frontier/rural geographic areas was "offered higher pay". "Offered higher pay" was the second measure taken for urban geographic areas; while the second measure taken for frontier/rural geographic areas was "increased recruitment efforts". "Increased training and development within the workforce" was the number three measure taken in urban geographic areas while "nothing" was the number three measure taken in frontier/rural geographic areas.

Figure 14
Measures Taken to Tackle Hard-to-Fill Vacancies by Geographic Areas

Urban vs. **Frontier/Rural**

Source: South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Data, Statistics & Vital Records